

hausted by the first, the second dies away. In these influences there is nothing direct, active, or special; they are the consequences of the faculty possessed by the eruptions of supplying or substituting each other. The vaccinia does not arrest the variola, but it is the variola that stops short in the face of the vaccinia; and, conversely, variola does not cut short the course of vaccinia, but this last interrupts its own course in presence of the variola. It is the right of precedence; and the more widely the two eruptions are separated, the more readily do they exclude each other; while the nearer they are together, the more independently do they proceed. Considered in themselves, the vaccine and variolous virus are so little capable of destroying each other's energy, that if they are mixed together, and inoculation performed with the mixture, two perfectly distinct eruptions are produced. Considered as regards their effects, we cannot say that vaccine *cures* variola, or even, rigorously speaking, that it *prevents* it. It takes its place, stands in its stead, and is neither more nor less than a substitution. Thus, so far from explaining the operation of vaccinia by the supposed opposition it offers to variola, we would rather do so by the analogy and reciprocal action of the two diseases.—*Brit. & For. Med.-Chir. Rev.*, April 1849, from *Bulletin de Thérapeutique*, tom. xxv. pp. 342-52.

20. *On the Influence of Physical Agents in Variola.* By M. SERRES.—The skin is pre-eminently the seat of the variolous eruption, not so much on account of its structure as its external position, and consequent exposure to the action of the air. Thus, those portions of the skin which, by the hair covering them, are somewhat protected from this influence, are those least affected by pustules. And if portions of the internal organs, naturally protected from the influence of the air, become exposed to this, no matter what their structure or functions may be, they also become covered with the pustules. Thus, in the same child, we may see the pharynx, epiglottis, and sometimes the trachea, exhibiting pustules, while the oesophagus is quite free. In trichiasis, in protrusion of the rectum, in protrusion of the vagina or uterus, the internal surface, now placed in the same condition as the external, furnishes pustules like it. It is to the exclusion of the air that the ectrotic mode of treating small-pox owes its success.

Seeing that the atmosphere produces so manifest an effect on the development of the pustules, we should expect that changes in its condition would not be without their influence. And thus it is, when we examine into the causes of the mortality of the disease prior to vaccination, we find that *inordinate dryness* of the air was one of the conditions most favorable to its aggravation, and this whether it co-existed with an excess of cold or heat. So, too, the history of the epidemics of this disease shows that they have always proved more fatal in the dry south, than in the more humid north. During 1817-19, M. Serres' small-pox patients were placed in small, ill-ventilated wards, which were also damp; but the cases of confluent small-pox manifested little severity. When, however, these wards were abandoned for spacious ones situated on the fourth story, very dry, and looking north and south, being very hot in summer, and very cold in winter, the mortality became so much greater, as to lead to the speedy resumption of the old, damp wards on the ground floor.

Does the same observation apply to vaccinia; and is this why revaccination has been so much more successful in the north than in the south?—*Brit. and For. Med.-Chir. Rev.*, from *Gazette Médicale de Paris*, 1848, No. 41.

21. *Nux Vomica in Intestinal Obstructions.*—It is notorious that certain obstinate cases of intestinal obstruction owe their difficulty to our ignorance of their cause; equally notorious that our practice is often empirical. In the “Transactions of the Medical Society of Rouliers,” Dr. OSSIEUR has communicated some valuable information concerning the use of nux vomica in such cases. He says it produces a degree of excitement, more or less energetic, where there is deficient intestinal innervation, which often restores them to their natural action. Assuming this—and the fact is undisputed—we cannot refuse our assent to the doctrine that the medicine may act upon the muscular fibres of the intestines as it does on the muscles generally. In support of this

view, Dr. Ossieur refers to the action of *nux vomica* in chronic catarrh, with relaxation of the mucous membrane, to lead colic, to prolapsus ani in children, and to atonic diarrhoea. He relates two cases of obstinate constipation, which, resisting all other means, yielded at once to the *nux vomica*.—*Medical Times*, May 26, 1849.

22. *Extractum Cotyledonis Umbilici in Epilepsy*.—Dr. JOSEPH BULLAR, of Southampton, recommends (*Provincial Med. and Surg. Journ.*, May 23, 1849) the use of the extractum cotyledonis umbilici, for the cure of epilepsy. “Several years ago,” he states, “the expressed juice of the cotyledon umbilicus, or napplewort, was recommended to a lady who had compound epilepsy, which had not yielded to medical treatment, and under its use the disease was entirely removed and has not returned. The patient was under the care of my friend Mr. Salter, of Poole, who watched the case with much interest, and mentioned the fact to me. Subsequently, my brother, Dr. W. Bullar, recommended the juice for a child in this neighbourhood, where the plant grew, and the epilepsy was cured. Rather more than a year ago I requested Mr. Randall, chemist, of Southampton, to prepare an extract of the expressed juice, in order to give the remedy a trial, and from the experience I have since had, I have no doubt in my own mind of the anti-epileptic power of the medicine, although sufficient time has not yet passed to bring forward cases as perfect cures.

“From the experience Dr. B. has had in a considerable number of cases (several of which were of a very hopeless kind), long perseverance, he says, is necessary; and if the number and violence of the fits are lessened, there are good grounds for hope and further perseverance. In all the cases, there has been a marked diminution in the violence and frequency of the attacks; and as, in two cases (one of which I heard to-day), it has first increased the violence of the fit, and as, in others, there have been transient symptoms of increased nervousness and headache, requiring a short suspension, I am in hopes that it may prove a true anti-epileptic. It is certainly in many cases nervo-tonic, as the improved nervous tone is shown by quieter sleep, fewer dreams, better spirits, more ability to take exercise, and a consciousness of general improvement. It has no other action on the body that I am aware of. It certainly produces no action on the bowels, for when there has been costiveness (which is so commonly the case in epileptics) the usual medicines to keep up a natural action have been required. I have used it with the precautions quinine requires in ague, attending to the general health, and endeavouring to remove and rectify faulty secretions, or any obvious local disorder. Some of the patients to whom I have given it have been in fair bodily health; in others the nervous system has been weak and excitable; in others weak and exhausted. In children, it is advisable to begin with a few brisk purgatives, in case the epilepsy may depend on worms; and in young men, the state of the urethra should be examined; as that state of debility kept up by seminal discharges, consequent on an irritable urethra, which so disposes the system to epilepsy, counteracts the beneficial influence of the medicine. If there is habitual costiveness, a simple dinner pill (as the compound rhubarb) is necessary. When, with an excitable nervous system, there is a foul tongue, yellowish eye, turbid, acid urine, and offensive motions, the state of the blood on which this depends must be corrected by a course of aperients, which excite the gastro-intestinal mucous membrane, liver, and kidneys to throw off the impurities, without weakening the general powers (aided by diet and hygienic means); for, unless the fluids are thus filtered and purified, no specific remedy can with any reason be expected to have a fair chance.

“The juice is prepared by bruising the leaves and leaf-stalks in a mortar, and expressing the juice from the bruised mass through a cloth. One tea-spoonful, twice a day, of the juice. I have prescribed five grains of the extract (which is made by evaporating this juice), twice a day, and occasionally three times. It may happen, that the disease may be much shortened by increasing the dose. This is matter for further trial.”